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TEST CORRELATES OF AIR FORCE WEATHER FORECASTER PROFICIENCY

Alan M. Kershner

March 1967

DECISION SCIENCES LABORATORY **ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS DIVISION** AIR FORCE SYSTEMS COMMAND UNITED STATES AIR FORCE L. G. Hanscom Field, Bedford, Massachusetts

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FOREWORD

The work reported here is part of the in-house research effort in support of Project 7682.

Special appreciation and thanks are due to the following:

Dr. Philip R. Merrifield for advice and assistance in developing the trial test battery.

Colonels William H. Best, Robert F. Long, Clarence E. Roache, Jr., Clifford A. Spohn, and Lieutenant Colonel Herschel H. Slater for invaluable assistance in obtaining subjects and a variety of other support.

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this program would not have been possible. Reviewed and approved by:

JAMES S. DUVA

Technical Director

Decision Sciences Laboratory

DONALD W. CONNOLLY

Project Officer

Decision Sciences Laboratory

Test Correlates of Air Force Weather Forecaster Proficiency

ABSTRACT

Results are presented from the administration of a battery of twenty-two tests to 76 Air Force weather forecasters who constituted criterion groups of "good" and "roor" forecasters selected by the use of the nominating technique. Five potential predictors were identified.

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I. INTRODUCTION*

This may be the concluding report in a research program designed to develop evaluation and selection instruments for Air Force weather

forecasters. Previous reports have (a) described the overall program (5;7),

- (b) identified AF weather forecaster proficiency characteristics (4),
- (c) described the development of the criterion data and two evaluation instruments (5), and (d) determined significant differential education, training, experience and age characteristics between good and poor weather forecasters (6).

Reports of successful identification or development of predictortests for high level occupations are sparse. In addition to the
problems of securing a large enough sample for which common criteria are
applicable, there is the problem of securing cooperative subjects.
The present study marks the second attempt to develop predictors for
Air Force weather forecasters (3).

In the prior study in 1948 Jenkins secured data on the following variables: education, college major, mathematics background, forecasting and observing experience, kind of meteorological training, forecasting aids most frequently used, speed and accuracy of perception, spatial relations ability, general academic ability, and vocational interests. Information on the initially listed six variables was gathered by questionnaire. The last named four variables were measured, respectively, by the Minnesota Clerical Test, the Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board, the Ohio State University Psychological Test, and the Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men.

^{*} A condensation of this report was presented under the same title at the American Psychological Association meetings in Los Angeles in September 1964.

Jenkins concluded that Air Force weather forecasters were a highly select group as to educational background, and as to their clerical*, spatial relations, and general academic abilities. Only the Names section of the Minnesota Clerical Test proved to be a consistent predictor of forecasting skill with a correlation of .31. Whereas Jenkins' findings depended on correlations with a short-range forecast verification score as the criterion, the results developed in this study are based upon criterion ratings by colleagues who worked with ratees as a forecaster for over three months. The analyses culminating in the reports referenced above, in conjunction with Jenkins' findings, gave rise to the following decisions:

- 1. Another attempt to find test correlates of weather forecasting proficiency was warranted because of the high quality of the criterion data in the present study. Evidence for the reliability of the criterion ratings was indicated by the finding that only 4% of over 22,000 ratings, applicable to 1695 officer forecasters, were contradictory (5, p.5 & 6). Evidence for the validity of the ratings was found in the number and kinds of the biographical characteristics for which significant differences were found between both "good" (high criterion) and "poor" (low criterion) officer weather forecasters and "good" and "poor" enlisted forecasters (6).
- 2. Tests of a high order of difficulty should be employed in consideration of the number of mean scores found by Jenkins to fall at very high percentiles.

*It is believed more appropriate to speak of this ability as speed and accuracy of perception.

- 3. Tests of greater pertinence to the abilities required of weather forecasters were needed with special attention to spatial relations. It was believed that the proficiency characteristics already identified (4) provided added clues for the selection of a trial test battery.
- 4 Verification of the criticality of perceptual speed and accuracy as found by Jenkins with the Names section of the Minnesota Clerical Test should be sought.

II. Procedure

A. Selection of Trial Test Batterv

To implement the aims set forth above, a variety of Armed

Forces tests were reviewed and one public and three private test

development organizations were consulted. Because of his concentration
on the study of high-level aptitudes, Professor Guilford was consulted
and through him assistance was obtained from Dr. Philip R. Merrifield,
who had experience in weather forecasting. Initially 26 tests were
included in the trial battery which took 2 days to administer; however
four tests were dropped from the battery in the early stages which
reduced testing time to a day and a half. Tests for which a complete
set of data were secured are listed in Table I; nineteen of them are
shown by major classification in Guilford and Merrifield's "The Structure
of Intellect Model: Its Uses and Implications", April 1960, where brief
descriptions of those so classified can be found (1). Tests dropped
from the battery are listed with accompanying reasoning in Appendix C.

Other tests included in the trial battery were, the Minnesota Clerical Test, DuBois and Gleser's Object-aperture Test, and items requiring cube matching from the U. S. Civil Service Commission (courtesy of

Ernest J. Primoff). For each test item the Object-aperture test shows a different three-dimensional object which is accompanied with five different two-dimensional apertures or openings. The subject's task is to select the opening through which the three-dimensional object could pass. The test has no specified time limit. The Civil Service Cubes Test consisted of twenty items which presented subjects with two separate cubes; one face of one cube contained two holes whereas one face of the other had two pegs; also presented were four ways in which the two cubes had been joined. Three faces, which included either holes or pegs, of the single cubes were shown whereas only two faces of one of the combined cubes and three of the other were shown. Each cube face had a unique design. The subject's task was to select the proper combination which could be formed by joining the two separate cubes. Subjects were allowed 35 minutes for this task.

B. Selection of Subjects

The primary ground rules for the selection of subjects were the same as used in the selection of forecasters for the biographical analysis, namely: "possessed a proficiency index of 1.33 and above or .90 and below as developed from ratings of officers with whom they had worked as forecasters" (6)*. Second, was geographic and travel fund availability. Many subjects volunteered - more were secured by command.

*Proficiency indices were developed by scoring two points for an above average rating, one point for an average rating, no points for a below average rating and dividing the total points by the number of ratings. Added criteria for inclusion in the present study were that six ratings be available for each subject and that no subject be included in the low criterion group who was not judged below average at least twice. It should be understood that when words such as "forecasting proficiency" and the like are used in this report that their connotation is limited to ratings by colleagues.

In order to prevent informal labelling of the forecasters as to criterion status, a number of them who did not fall within either the high and low criterion groups specified above were also administered the complete trial test battery. High criterion N=39; Low criterion N=37.

The criterion status of each of the 76 officers who composed the high and low criterion groups is presented with their test scores in Appendix A. The subjects ranged in rank from captain through full colonel with ten warrant officers included within the groups; and the approximate age range was between 39 and 47.

C. Test Administration

Tests were administered to groups as large as twelve and to single individuals. The administration of every test to every subject was directly supervised and monitored. The data were obtained from July 1961 to December 1963.

III. Discussion and Results

Table I presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the high and low criterion groups in conjunction with certain chi square probabilities and the formula by which each test was scored.

A. The Spatial Problem:

Before directing attention to the positive findings of this study it is appropriate to point out the lack of success in identifying a differential predictor for a spatial ability at a significant level. (The frequent lack of correspondence between parameters generated from verbal statements of job requirements and those generated by aptitude testing has plagued psychologists for a long time.) Because of the very considerable emphasis on the importance of spatial ability by forecasters themselves when analyzing the performance of the "best" and "poorest" forecaster with whom they had worked, special efforts were exerted to include a variety of spatial tests in the trial test battery. Not only do forecasters need to visualize weather in three dimensions but they must also contend with associated acceleration and deceleration trends. Five tests of a three dimensional spatial nature were included in the initial trial test battery and scores were obtained for all 76 officers on four of them.

Since spatial tests formed part of the test battery for the selection of air crew members during WW II, it was desirable to ascertain their representation within the two criterion groups. Twenty-two of the 37 members of the low criterion group were former air crew members (pilots, navigators, or bombardiers) whereas but 4 of the 39 members of the high

criterion group had such rated military air-crew experience. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the only two tests upon which average scores for the low criterion group equalled or exceeded high criterion scores were tests of spatial ability; specifically, Civil Service Cubes and G-Z Spatial Orientation respectively. The failure to find a significant difference between good and poor forecasters for one of the spatial ability tests may be attributable to greater preselection among the low criterion group on spatial ability. Hence, it is not appropriate to conclude that a spatial ability is not both germane and important for weather forecasting but merely that this particular study has not demonstrated its differential criticality. Even after an item analysis of the spatial ability tests, nothing promising emerged.

An examination of the scores made by the Air Force weather fore-casters on the two dimensional Minnesota Paper Form Board reported by

Jenkins, and their scores on the G-Z Spatial Orientation and G-Z Spatial

Visualization in this study indicate that a spatial ability may be quite

important for weather forecasting. It is for the aforementioned tests that

normative data are available. Jenkins has reported as follows (3): "The

mean score on the revised Minnesota Paper Form Board when compared to...

various male industrial groups falls from the 80th to the 97th percentile

with a median value at the 90th percentile. Even compared to first and

fifth year engineering students the percentile ranks are 80 and 70

respectively." In this study the mean score for the 76 forecasters

on the Spatial Orientation was 24.6 which falls at about the 65th percentile

when compared to G-Z norms for college men. For the Spatial Visualization

(Form B) scores for both 10 and 13 minutes—were obtained. Table I and the appendix show only the scores for thirteen minutes. The mean score for all 76 weather forecasters for ten minutes was 19.1 which places at the 61st percentile on G-Z norms for college freshmen. It may be worth noting that on the G-Z Spatial Visualization that a difference of only .7 occurred between the high and low criterion groups for 10 minutes whereas there was a difference of 1.3 for 13 minutes.

This suggests the possibility of generating greater variability by permitting more subjects to encounter more of the more difficult items embracing three rotations.

B. Positive Findings: Potential Predictors

Scrutiny of Table I discloses significant differences between the two criterion groups at the 3% level or better for five of the tests which were administered. Table II presents the correlations between nine of the tests and the biserial correlations between the tests and the criterion proficiency ratings. Biserial r for the predicted scores from a discriminant function analysis* was .59. Actually X₂ and X₃ alone can provide a multiple R within the criterion of .56.

It may be noted that, in terms of Guilford's "Structure of Intellect", three tests, namely, Ship Destination, Pertinent Questions, and Word Matrix are identified with Cognition which has been defined (1 p.5) as "discovery, awareness, rediscovery, or recognition of information in various forms; comprehension or understanding". More specifically, these tests are

^{*}Performed at Arthur D. Little Inc. through the courtesy of Dr. Vincent E. Guiliano and by Mr. Joel E. Jensen; y' = 2.554X + .8983X3 + 1.921X5 + 1.701X6 - 189.

TABLE II

Correlations with Criterion and Intercorrelations of Selected Tests Employed in Trial AF Weather Forecaster Test Battery

		r Biserial X 1	x ₂	x ₃	x ₄	х 5	х ₆	x ₇	X ₈	X ₉
x ₂	Ship Destination	.52								
х ₃	Correlate Completion	. 46	.54							
Х4	Minnesota Names	.38	. 44	.61						
X ₅	Pertinent Questions	.37	. 35	.31	.29					
х ₆	Word Matrix	. 33	. 32	. 36	.28	.11				
X ₇	Word Group Naming	•29	. 31	. 32	.38	.12	.22			
x ₈	Logical Reasoning	.25	. 36	. 42	.14	.14	.25	.48		
Х 9	General Reasoning	.20	.41	.41	. 19	.04	.24	.28	. 45	
X 10	Perceptual Speed	.20	.13	. 30	. 33	.17	. 12	.30	.16	.04

identified respectively with the subcategories of General Reasoning, Conceptual Foresight and Semantic Relations.

The Correlate Completion II test is identified with the Structure of Intellect category Convergent Production. This is defined by Guilford and Merrifield as "generation of information from given information, where the emphasis is upon achieving unique or conventionally accepted or best outcomes" (1 p.5); the more specific subcategory represented by this test is Symbolic Correlates.

Although both this and Jenkins' study yielded significant findings for the Minnesota Names there is a considerable disparity between the overall mean of 145.8 which Jenkins reported and the overall mean of 125.3 found in this study. Every possible attempt has been made to seek some rational explanation of this difference but it has been impossible to secure identifying data for participants in the former study; the degree to which the test administrations were monitored in the former study is unknown; Jenkins has stated that tests were administered by the Air Weather Service (3); from his dissertation it appears from Appendix C that the test packages were mailed to the subjects themselves who were requested to secure their own monitors (2). When the differences between Jenkins high and low criterion groups and their standard deviations are compared with those of this study, the correspondence is considerably greater than exists for the mean values. For group one Jenkins found a difference of 16.2 between the upper and lower criterion groups with respective standard deviations of 22.1 and 37.6 (2 p.73); for group two the difference was 18.2 with respective standard deviations of 25.0 and 33.0 (2 p.99). Although the average age for the group in this

study was greater by approximately 14 years than for Jenkins' group, such an age difference would not seem to account for twenty and a half points in mean difference.

It is recommended that the tests found as potential predictors in this study be administered to recently qualified Air Force weather forecasters and to new forecasters being appointed in an effort to provide validating evidence for their operational use.

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APPENDIX A

TEST RESULTS

SCORES OF HIGH CRITERION AIR FORCE WEATHER FORECASTERS

×	7 111 14 111 112 .	13 11 13 10	11 10 13 13	13 17 14 5	13 13 14 14	13 10 12 10	12 13 12 11 12	12 13 14
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S	14 14 19 10 10	122	10 15 13 14	15 15 15 15	15 17 17 17	14 12 6 11 11	12 13 13 14	16 11 13
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44	12 18 22 22 19	13 26 20 20 20	9 16 21 13 16	26 21 9 18 17	16 8 21 19 18	18 10 17 20 14	12 16 20 17 17	17 26 22 16
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	⊣ ∨ w 4 v	6. 8. 9.	11. 12. 13. 14.	16. 17. 18. 19.	21. 22. 23. 24.	26. 27. 28. 29.	31. 32. 34. 35.	36. 37. 39.

LEGEND FOR APPENDIX A

- a. Criterion Score
- b. Associations III -- CNO5A
- c. Competitive Planning
- d. Correlation Completion
- e. Civil Service Cubes
- f. G-Z General Reasoning
- g. Gestalt Transformation
- h. Logical Reasoning
- i. Match Problems II
- j. Match Problems III
- k. Minnesota Clerical Numbers
- 1. Minnesota Clerical Names
- m. Object Aperture
- n. G-Z Perceptual Speed
- o. Pertinent Questions
- p. Seeing Trends
- q. Ship Destination
- r. Similarities
- s. Social Situations
- t. G-Z Spatial Orientation
- u. G-Z Spatial Visualization
- v. G-Z Verbal Comprehension
- w. Word Group Naming
- x. Word Matrix

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APPENDIX B

Special Notes on the Testing

Test scores presented in Table I and Appendix I for the G-Z Spatial Visualization were obtained by allowing subjects 13 minutes rather than the 10 minutes prescribed in the instructions.

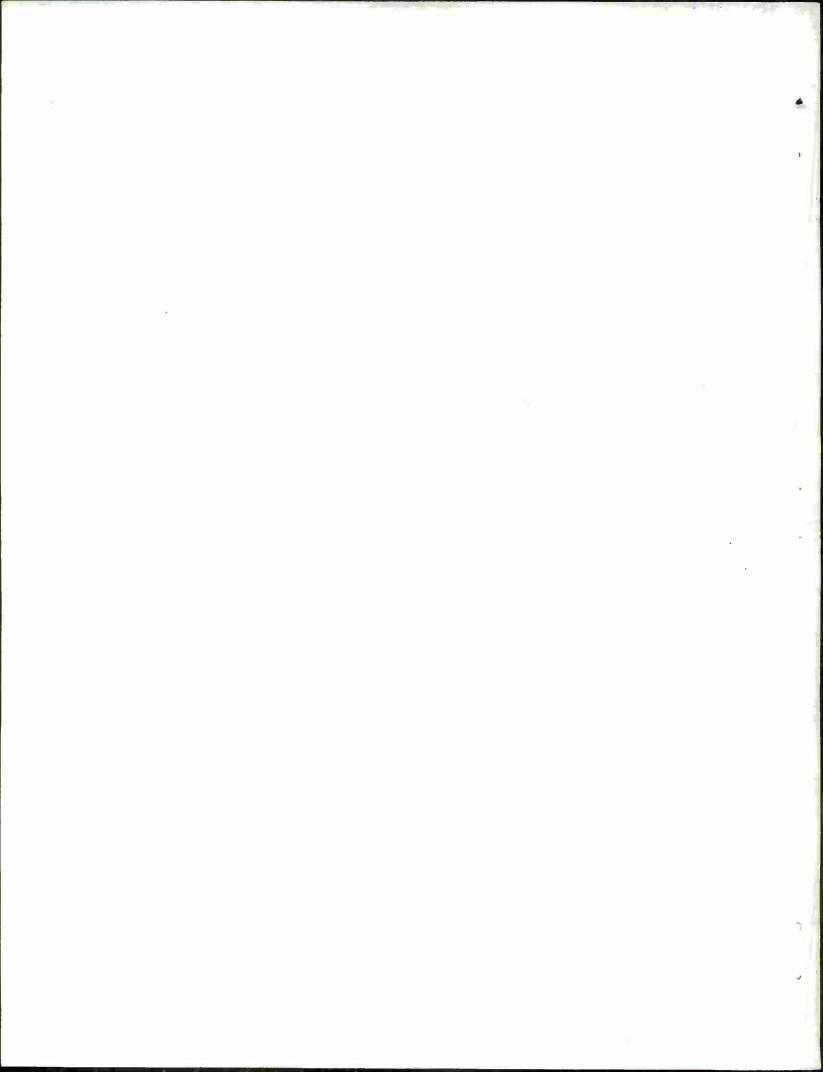
Test item #13 was omitted from the DuBois-Gleser Object-aperture

Test Form B - hence, maximum possible score was 27 rather than 28.

Social Situations (EP03A) consisted of 23 items (216-238) - total time allowed subjects was $7\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

APPENDIX C

Four tests were discontinued from the original battery. An ETS architectural aptitude test designed to tap a spatial ability was deemed to require too much time for administration (40 minutes) in terms of the number of items subjects were able to complete. An ETS Picture Discrimination Test concerned with perceptual speed seemed to require a disproportinate time to record responses. The Seeing Problems test appeared difficult to score objectively and took too much time to score. The Expressional Fluency simply was not taken seriously by the Air Force Weather Forecasters.



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13 ABSTRACT			
Results are presented from the administration	of a battery of tw	enty-ty	wo tests to
76 Air Force weather forecasters who constit	uted criterion grou	nbs of ,	'good" and
"poor" forecasters selected by the use of the	e nominating techi	nique.	rive potential
predictors were identified.			

Security Classification

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